Sciatica Stretches and Exercises for Seniors

By: Ron Miller, PT, Physical Therapist

Last Reviewed: 11/2/2025

Stretching and exercise can help relieve compression on the sciatic nerve root, which leads to sciatica pain. However, many stretches and exercises are too challenging for older adults. Here are 4 effective sciatica stretches and exercises that are gentle on the body and easy to perform—and most importantly, can help ease your sciatica pain.

Sciatica exercises help to reduce current sciatica pain and provide conditioning to prevent future recurrences. Read Sciatica Exercises for Sciatica Pain Relief

Pelvic tilt

While this stretch works better on a yoga mat, you can perform it on a firm mattress if that's easier for you.

1. To begin, lie on your back. Bend your knees so both feet are flat on the surface with toes pointed forward.
2. Pull your belly button in so your pelvis pushes toward the ceiling and your back flattens against the surface.
3. Hold this position for 20 seconds, and then relax. Try to do this stretch 10 times.

Watch 3 Yoga Poses for Sciatica Pain Relief (Easy for Beginners) Video

Be sure to rely on your core muscles—and not to push with your legs—when you tilt your pelvis.

Bridge

The bridge is an exercise similar to the pelvic tilt.

1. Start by lying on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the surface.
2. Slowly lift your buttocks up, pushing through your heels as you raise your pelvis toward the ceiling.
3. When your thighs and torso align, hold this stretch for 8 to 10 seconds (less if you're just starting out), then slowly lower back down to starting position.

As your strength develops, work toward the goal of completing 2 sets of 10 bridges.

Seated hamstring stretch

Tight hamstrings can worsen sciatica pain. Increasing the flexibility at the back of your legs can help ease—and further prevent—the pain. You can do this stretch while seated in a chair:

1. Sit on the edge of a chair with 1 foot flat on the floor. Extend the other leg straight out in front of you with the heel on the ground and toes flexed up.
2. Keeping your upper back straight, lean forward in your seat until you feel a gentle stretch behind your leg.
3. Hold this stretch for 20 seconds and then return to starting position. Work up to completing 3 repetitions.

Stretching your hamstring muscles is one of the most effective and simple steps you can take for managing sciatica pain.

Watch Seated Chair Hamstring Stretch for Sciatica Relief Video

Prone leg raise

The prone leg raise is a stabilizing exercise that is particularly helpful for people with sciatica pain from degenerative disc disease.

1. Lie prone, flat on your stomach, either on a yoga mat or the surface of a mattress. Rest your face on your folded arms in front of you.
2. Tighten your lower stomach muscles.
3. Raise a leg behind you, bending your knee slightly and without arching your back or neck. Your leg should be at a low level and does not have to come far off the ground.
4. Hold for about 5 seconds, then slowly lower to starting position.

Watch: Sciatica Exercises for Degenerative Disc Disease Video

As your strength builds, try to do 2 sets of 10 leg raises.

The above stretches and exercises won't alleviate sciatica pain for everyone. But they are worth trying and discussing with your doctor or physical therapist.

See Physical Therapy and Exercise for Sciatica

Learn more:

3 Simple Stretches for Sciatica Pain Relief

Video: 9 Exercises for Sciatica Pain Relief

Get our FREE Guide to Natural Back Pain Relief

Email Address

Subscribe

Ron Miller is a licensed physical therapist with more than 20 years of experience specializing in spine care. He helped develop the physical therapy department at the NeuroSpine Center of Wisconsin, where he focuses on manual therapy, spinal stabilization, and therapeutic exercises.

Editor's Top Picks

- Gentle Yoga Pose for Sciatica Pain Relief Video
- Video: 9 Exercises for Sciatica Pain Relief
- 3 Yoga Poses for Sciatica Pain Relief (Easy for Beginners) Video
- Sciatica Treatment Video
- McKenzie Method Exercises for Back Pain and Sciatica Video

➤ 7 McKenzie Method Exercises for Back Pain and Sciatica

This site is for educational purposes only; no information is intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. The information is produced and reviewed by over 200 medical professionals with the goal of providing trusted, uniquely informative information for people with painful health conditions.

Veritas Health LLC, 580 N Bank Ln, Lake Forest, IL, 60045, USA